

themselves, and we honor Senator BYRD for them.

But his greatest feat will always be the dignity he has brought to the U.S. Senate every day of his life, throughout his tenure there.

He is a gentle but firm leader, who has the ability to share, in his writing and vocally, his deep and abiding reverence for the Senate as an institution. Each week, Senator BYRD offers a history lesson on the floor of the Senate, addressing his colleagues on the floor and the Nation that may be watching C-SPAN, on the importance of knowing, and observing and above all respecting, the traditions of the Senate, its rules of engagement and the parliamentary procedures, that govern it as an institution.

Tonight I wish to join my voice with the voices of his Senate colleagues, those in his beloved West Virginia and all our Nation in paying tribute to West Virginia's senior Senator.

And so it is with great personal honor, and with the highest esteem, that I rise on this occasion to pay tribute to Senator ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia for having become the first U.S. Senator in history to cast 14,000 votes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the previous order of the House, a gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE REPUBLICAN RECORD ON MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it was 30 years ago today that Medicare passed the House of Representatives, and even in 1965 Republicans did not support the program.

Their record on Medicare has been clear and is illustrated with this chart that we have here. At the time when Medicare was voted upon in 1960, 97 percent of Senate Republicans voted against creation of the Medicare Program; in 1962, 86 percent of Senate Republicans voted against creation of the Medicare Program; in 1964, 85 percent of Senate Republicans voted against creation of the Medicare Program; and then in 1965, 93 percent of the House Republicans voted to replace Medicare with their voluntary, no guarantees substitute. The rest of the chart indicates the remainder of the Republican record 30 years ago.

Even the lead Republican presidential contender today, Senator BOB DOLE, voted against the passage of the Medicare Program when he was in Congress 30 years ago this very day. And now that the Republicans are in control of Congress, one of their first acts

is to dismantle the program that has assisted so many senior citizens in living a longer and decent life.

As many know, the Republicans seek to cut \$270 billion from the Medicare Program, costing senior citizens over a \$1,000 in additional costs per year. Republicans claim that these cuts will not hurt senior citizens, but if health costs continue to rise faster than the growth in Medicare to seniors, then they will either get less services or pay more money. It is that simple.

Of course the Republicans have not discussed the specific details of their Medicare plans, because they are afraid to tell seniors what will happen with the \$270 billion in cuts that they have proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge senior citizens to ask their Congressmen how these \$270 billion in cuts will affect them, because if these cuts were not going to hurt seniors, then the plans would have been announced before a budget number was chosen.

Instead, the Republicans are reforming Medicare backwards by arbitrarily picking \$270 billion, the largest Medicare cut in history, and hiding the true facts from seniors. When Medicare was passed 30 years ago today, most Republicans said that it was not needed. Mr. Speaker, the facts could not be more clear.

I would like to illustrate the positive impact that the Medicare Program has had on the lives of senior citizens through a few illustrations that we have here today.

The first chart talks about the poverty rate for the age, which has dropped since 1967. If you look at the figures, for the general population and the senior population since the time Medicare was enacted, you can see the significant drop in the poverty rate for senior citizens.

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Mr. PALLONE. Next we would like to show the drop in the death by stroke, which is indicated on this chart. For those over 65, rates have fallen by 63 percent in the years between 1960 and 1991, basically the 30-year or so period that we are talking about since the beginning of Medicare.

Mr. Chairman, death by heart disease has also dramatically decreased. For those over 65, rates have fallen by 40 percent in the years between 1960 and 1991, again from the beginning of the debate on Medicare until relatively recently.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the next chart will show the number of seniors who have health coverage. In 1959, only 46 percent of America's seniors had health care coverage before Medicare was enacted, and of course this year in 1995, after Medicare and after 30 years of the program, 99 percent of America's senior citizens now have health care coverage.

Mr. Chairman, instead of realizing these benefits, unfortunately, Republicans want to gut Medicare to meet

their other backward promises. One plan that the party is floating is the voucher plan, which would basically limit the health care coverage of senior citizens. This plan will give seniors substandard health care, unless they have the ability to spend money out of their own pocket to pay for better coverage.

Mr. Chairman, another plan would force seniors into managed care. Some people know them as HMO's. Many seniors are happy with their doctors and are not ready to be told which doctors they can or cannot seek, which is often the case with HMO's or other managed care programs.

Life before Medicare for senior citizens was a world of poverty, low life expectancy and despair. Medicare has played an integral role in seniors' lives by not forcing them to choose between health care, food or shelter. Unfortunately, the Republicans want to take us back to the days when seniors had to make those unfortunate choices.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to read one story from a New Jersey resident who submitted testimony for the record during the Committee on Ways and Means debate on Medicare during the early 1960's, because I think it illustrates the problems that many senior citizens had before the enactment of the Medicare program. This person testified before the committee on Ways and Means and said, "I hope and pray that I do not live long enough to be a senior citizen. It is very hard for me to beg. I would rather do without, whether it is food, medicine or a doctor. Only severe pain or an emergency would get me into a hospital. I control my condition with pills".

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just hope and pray that the Republicans realize how vital Medicare is to every senior citizen. Those who cannot remember the past are unfortunately condemned to repeat it, but hopefully, we will not see it repeated with the Medicare Program being gutted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. BROWNBACK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BROWNBACK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FRANK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Guam [Mr. UNDERWOOD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. UNDERWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]